

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

Labor's No. 1 Enemy—the Rockefeller

by ART SHIELDS

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER has just placed a leading Rockefeller oil man in charge of America's international labor relations.

Ike's new "labor" appointee is Austin T. Foster, the former general counsel and director of the Socony-Mobile Oil Co. This is a two-and-a-half billion dollar outfit, with vast holdings in Indonesia, Arabia, Japan, India, South Africa, Egypt, Colombia, Venezuela and Texas. It is controlled by the Rockefeller family, which owns 17 per cent of the stock.

And the Rockefeller family is Labor's Enemy Number One. It has fought the labor movement with gunmen, spies and company unions through the years.

The State Department has been run by John Foster Dulles, a Rockefeller agent, for five years.

The Central Intelligence Agency (the "think-and-scare" CIA), which spends up to a billion dollars a year, is run by Allan W. Dulles, another Rockefeller man.

The Defense Department is using Nelson Rockefeller, the family leader, as its official "adviser," as it reorganizes the Pentagon.

And now Socony-Mobile is shaping the Government's international labor policies.

Ike's new "labor" appointee has a big field to work in. He will "advise" Secretary of Labor Mitchell on world labor affairs. He will have the ear of all U.S. labor attaches overseas. And his job will be to split and weaken world labor as much as he can. And thus keep wages down. For most of the Rockefeller profits come from the sweated labor of overseas workers.

The Rockefellers have been compelled to yield to unions sometimes. They had to in Venezuela before the Military Junta took over in 1948, and they will probably have to there again. And they had to so in several U.S. refineries during CIO oil campaigns.

Such cases are exceptional, however. For the Rockefeller empire has been well described as a "bastion of industrial feudalism," by President Knight of the CIO oil union.

And most of the oil family's operations follow the pattern set up by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. long ago. That is NO UNION, when spies and thugs and military dictators can prevent them. And fake company unions when the family has to make a democratic gesture.

Both methods were used in the Colorado coal fields 44 years ago. Rockefeller gunmen first burned 13 children and four mothers to death in the massacre at the strikers' tent colony at Ludlow on April 20, 1914. Then John D. Jr., the Bible class teacher, set up a company union with lovey dovey phrases, when millions of folks protested.

Those protests swept New York City. And I remember them well. For I stood on lower Broadway while I.W.W. workers and Socialist Party members and George Sterling, the poet, marched in front of the Rockefeller offices with mourning

bands on their arms. They were led by Upton Sinclair, the Socialist novelist, who was thrown into prison that first day.

The protests didn't end there, however. The good people of America were aghast with horror. For the gunmen—whom John D., Jr., defended—were guilty of deliberate murder. They poured Rockefeller oil on the tents as they set them afire. And they machine-gunned fleeing survivors, and shot down Louis Tikas, a Greek miner, the strike leader, as he held a flag of truce in his hand.

The labor movement was fighting mad. Gene Debs was calling for guns to resist the Rockefeller killers. And armed trade unionists were arriving in Colorado when the federal troops came in. The troops were sent by President Wilson. And they occupied the coal fields while the company union was set up.

So the billionaire family got away with murder again. But it's never been forgiven by labor. And the Rockefellers were the most hated men in America for many years.

The labor press carried many vivid anti-Rockefeller cartoons in those early years. And one bitter pair of drawings in the United Mine Workers Journal comes to mind. The drawing at the left shows John D., Jr., at his Sunday School class. In his frock coat and tails. A big black Bible is in his hand, and he is reading "Suffer little children to come unto me . . . for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." And the drawing at the right showed the children burning to death, while a hand labeled "John D., Jr." pours oil on the oil.

Robert Minor, the future Communist leader, supplied the most powerful anti-Rockefeller cartoons of all. Bob covered the historic oil workers strike against Standard Oil at Bayonne, N. J., in July, 1915. Six workers were killed, and many wounded, by Rockefeller gunmen, and Bob left some unforgettable pictures behind him in the files of The Call, the New York Socialist "daily."

I didn't meet Bob at that time. But I visited the strike lines, and saw the Bergoff Agency gunmen squinting over the sights of their Army type rifles. There were nearly 600 of these gorillas altogether. They were crouching behind wooden stockade walls that surrounded the Rockefeller refinery. And I eagerly followed Bob's daily drawings in the then militant Socialist paper.

The strike was crushed, however. The IWW and Socialist leaders got little AFL support. The great mass production unions were still in the future. The martyred Slavs, Italians and Lithuanians, who struck against starvation wages, were buried. And the Rockefeller gunman got away with murder again.

More Bayonne workers were killed in another strike the next year while the Rockefeller fortune swelled in the profits of the first world war. And the family's wealth kept climbing, until it has passed the three billion dollar mark today.

The family's biggest oil profits don't come from American workers, however. They come from dark-skinned men and women in sun-baked foreign lands. (Foster) has a special interest And Ike's new "labor" appointee

in curbing the unions abroad. For 55 per cent of Socony-Mobile's production comes from overseas.

Right now the Rockefellers are especially fearful of Indonesian Labor. They watched the unions taking over the former properties of the Dutch imperialists by bold mass action tactics. And they fear Indonesia may reclaim all its Sumatra oil fields again.

The Rockefellers are also alarmed for their oil interests in West New Guinea. For the Sukarno Government is asserting its right to this important land in the Indonesian archipelago. And the militant unions are behind him.

Ike's "labor" appointee, is also facing a big task in Venezuela, where the oil fields are controlled by the company union. And the drive to replace the oil firms' company unions with bona fide organizations can be expected to begin.

And it's very doubtful if the old, old propaganda record—"We're fighting Communism"—can win in Latin America again.

This propaganda record is also losing its effectiveness with European Labor, and some of its potency in America, too. But that's another story.

NEWS

from the

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

James P. Mitchell, Secretary

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LABOR SECRETARY APPOINTS AUSTIN FOSTER INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell today announced the appointment of Austin T. Foster, retired General Counsel and Director of Socony Mobil Oil Company, as a special consultant to him on international labor matters.

Mr. Foster, whose home is in Derby Line, Vermont, will assist and advise Secretary Mitchell with respect to United States participation in the International Labor Organization as well as other international matters for which the Secretary has a responsibility.

Mr. Foster retired from Socony Mobil last year. He has served as chairman of the Treaty Committee of the National Foreign Trade Council and director of the Community Service Society and the Pan American Society. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Society on International Law and the Academy of Political Science. He served overseas as a First Lieutenant in the Air Force during World War I.

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied